

Illusions of the Mind

by Bumblebee

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Summary: Meet Laura Graham. One of her best friends is dead, and the other is missing. But will everything change at Hogwarts?

1. Enter Laura

> <meta name="Generator"> A/N: Hey y'all

A/N: Hey y'all! It's me, Bumblebee; I'm back, with another story! J I haven't been writing a lot lately, because of mid-term exams and a school writing contestâ€¦ long story. This piece of writing promises to be LONG. I have it planned out~ mostly. I can change it at any time. Special thanks goes out to Ninamazing, who's the sweetest fanfiction reviewer on the Earth; Laura Nolan, who is the ****coolest****, and Jenni, my web-page-construction buddy. Also Ame*thyst, who can write, but not format. J Just kidding, Jessâ€¦ Hooray for you all!

Disclaimer: Harry Potter, Hermione Granger, Ron Weasley, and everybody at Hogwarts are not the property of me, it belongs to J. K. Rowling. Sophie McClellan and Laura Graham both belong to me. J I feel so specialâ€¦

70 days (and counting) until book 4! Has anyone else heard the rumor about it being over 700 pages? J

Illusions of the Mind

Laura Graham sat at her spacious kitchen counter, opening the mail. Laura loved mail, except for bills. Sometimes, Remus would send her a letter, detailing his adventures in England, and every once in a while, Minerva would contact her. She had to admit, Minerva had been smart, proposing that Laura flee to the United States to escape the press after the accident. At least that's what Laura thought of it as.

Flipping through the mail, Laura noticed three bills, a catalogue for J. C. Penney's, and a letter addressed in a unique shade of emerald.

Laura's heart immediately skipped a beat. She knew whom this letter was from. The one and only Albus Dumbledore.

Laura slit the envelope open with the blunt edge of a kitchen knife. She browsed the loopy handwriting on the grained parchment and gasped. The letter read:

—

My Dear Laura,

New evidence has surfaced in the Sirius Black case. I urge you to come out to England for the trial, since I am aware that you know the truth in this delicate situation, and always have. I trust your judgement, and am assured that you will act in the best interests of the predicament.

If you do decide to journey over the ocean, there is an opening for a teacher here at Hogwarts. I am offering you this post, as a Defense Against the Dark Arts professor. I do know you have a teaching degree. Prof. Lupin unfortunately had to resign from the post last year, since Severus Snape accidentally let 'something' slip.

Laura, if you do come, please contact me. There is a girl by the name of Sophie McClellan in Boston. She is coming to Hogwarts at the beginning of term, seeing as her family is relocating n England. If you're coming out here, it would be of great help if you could accompany her on the trip. Her year hasn't learned Apparation yet.

Harry is here at Hogwarts. He's met Sirius, and knows the truth also.

Prof. McGonagall sends her love, and Prof. Flitwick wishes to see you again.

Yours,

Albus Dumbledore

—

Laura closed her eyes and massaged her temples. She remembered the ridicule directed at her after the 'London Massacre of November First', as the accident was called by the wizarding community. The taunting, the screaming, and the trial. She remembered all of it. She didn't think that the wizarding community would welcome her warmly, after everything they'd done before.

Laura sighed, retrieved a ballpoint pen from the floor, where she had dropped it, and hurriedly penned a reply to Albus.

—

Albus-

Will come, since I have the odd feeling that, with you, I'm fighting a losing battle. Need info about the McClellan girl, but otherwise fine. How is Remus, by the way? He and Severus have never been great friendsâ€¦ See you on the start of term.

Love Always,

Laura

—

Laura tapped the piece of stationery with her wand and it disappeared. She had long since learned that owls didn't work well on cross-continental flight.

Laura shuffled into her study and collapsed into her favorite armchair. She thought of all the times her group of friends had shared. James, Lily, Remus, Julie, Peter, Sirius. Especially Sirius. Laura sighed and fell asleep.

*

When Laura woke, there was another letter waiting for her. The parchment was identical to the first letters.

—

Laura-

Her parents do know, you just have to pick her up. Her house is at 375 Madison Ave. Hope to see you soon.

-Albus

—

Laura walked up the flight of stairs into her bedroom. She pulled her Hogwarts trunk out of the closet and filled it to the brim with everything that she wanted to take. Clothes, photos, all kinds of memorabilia. She left the trunk inside, and experimentally stepped out into the warm, humid air, characteristic to Illinois in August. Laura walked back inside, ran a comb through her chestnut-brown curls, and Apparated away.

*

While Laura was Apparating halfway across the United States, Harry Potter was in Surrey, England, at his Uncle Vernon's house. Uncle Vernon was screaming so loud, his face was a brilliant shade of tomato.

"Boy, what did you think you were doing?! You don't deserve to be breathing the same air as us normal people!"

"Um... Uncle Vernon? If you keep screaming like that, the whole neighborhood will hear, and then they'll think you're the abnormal one."

"Oh, right." Uncle Vernon lowered his voice- a bit. "But I don't want you anywhere near this house ever again! Go away."

"Can I have my stuff?"

"If you get it and then leave!"

"Ohâ€¦ okay!"

Harry ran to the cupboard under the stairs and retrieved his Hogwarts things, with the help of Uncle Vernon's key ring. He ran back upstairs, to the linen closet, where Aunt Petunia and Dudley lay on the floor, hiding. Harry stifled a giggle. He was surprised that Dudley could fit in the tiny compartment, let alone Aunt Petunia too.

"See you next summer, Aunt Petunia, Dudley."

Dudley screamed. Harry proceeded to run down the stairs, laughing like a maniac. He grabbed the telephone and dialed his friend Hermione on the telephone. He and Hermione had planned the 'Escape from Privet Drive' for weeks.

"Good morning, Granger residence."

"Hello, is Hermione there?"

"Speaking."

"Herm? This is Harry."

"Don't say anymore, we're on our way."

"Thanks, Hermione."

"No problem." His friend hung up. She'd be at number 4 Privet Drive in about fifteen minutes.

Harry walked out and sat on the lawn. Mrs. Figg, the next door neighbor, noticed him, and crossed the Dursley's perfect lawn. "Headed to boarding school, Harry?"

"Yes ma'am."

"Have fun."

"Yes, I will. Thanks, Mrs. Figg."

She leaned down and spoke quietly into his ear. "Anything would be better than this, right?" She motioned to the Dursley's home.

Harry grinned. "Yep, you're right." He heard the squealing of rubber tires, and saw the Granger's car pull up to the curb. He checked his watch- 10 minutes. He wondered how fast Mr. Granger had driven.

"Hi, Harry!" called Hermione.

"Bye, Mrs. Figg."

"Goodbye, Harry."

Harry dragged his trunk across the lawn, pulling up large chunks of sod. He didn't care, Mr. Dursley would just scream at the air, hoping that Harry would hear him. No big deal.

Harry crawled into the backseat of the Granger's car. Hermione was

already there, reading a book. "Hey, Harry."

"Hello, Hermione. Hello Mr. Granger."

"Hello, Harry. Nice to meet you."

"Same."

The rest of the car ride proceeded with Hermione and Harry comparing their summers. Finally, Harry spotted the Leaky Cauldron out of his window.

Harry and Hermione walked into the row of shops, and spotted Ron Weasley sitting outside Gringotts Bank, on the marble steps. The three best friends were back together, and ready for anything.

*

Laura appeared at 375 Madison Avenue around 2:00. She knocked on the heavy wooden door in the old-fashioned home. A girl with blonde hair in a braid opened the door. "Hello?"

"Hi, is this the McClellan home?"

"Yep, I'm Sophie."

"Hi Sophie. I'm Laura Graham. Is your mom home?"

"Nope, she went on vacation with my dad." The girl grinned. "But Professor Dumbledore sent us a letter telling us that you would come to get me. So, my mom left you a note. Come on in."

Laura stepped inside the house, while Sophie hit the deadbolt back into place. "I'm supposed to keep the door locked," she explained, "Since my mom is afraid some murderer will come to get me. Here's the note."

Sophie scooped a letter off the trestle table and handed it to Laura. Laura read the letter.

—

Miss Laura Graham,

Professor Dumbledore has notified us that you would pick up Sophie. She knows where her trunk is, but she needs all her Hogwarts supplies. I haven't been in England for a while, so I don't know where all the shops, etc. are anymore. I'd appreciate it if you or some other person could take Sophie to get her stuff. I trust that you will take good care of her at Hogwarts. David and I will be in England on October 5th.

Yours Sincerely,

Alicia Marie McClellan

—

Laura called up the stairs to Sophie. "Sophie, is your stuff

packed?"

"Yeah."

"Then bring it down here."

"Okay."

Sophie pushed her trunk down the stairs, where it landed with a thud. "All ready," she said.

Laura grinned. She went over and tapped it with her wand. The trunk shrunk to the size of a mousetrap. "Here," she instructed Sophie. "Keep this in your pocket."

"Cool!"

Laura grabbed Sophie's hand, stood next to the trestle table, and muttered a few words. And suddenly, Laura and Sophie were gone.

*

They reappeared in the Leaky Cauldron. Tom, the bartender, looked surprised. Of course, people disappeared and reappeared in the pub all the time. Only this time, it was none other than Laura Graham who appeared.

"Laura, is that you?"

Laura grinned. "Yep, it is. I'm back!"

"Laura, I'd be careful. Sirius Black got loose about two months ago. And with you appearing back in London now, they'll suspect you of helping him. You won't exactly be welcomed."

Laura gasped. "Sirius is loose?! And Albus didn't tell me? I could kill him right now!" Tom? Got any paper?"

Sophie sat at a table, while Laura scribbled a note on a piece of parchment.

—

Albus—

You never told me Sirius was loose! How am I supposed to deal with this in Diagon Alley of all places? I think the public will be— let's just say, less than overjoyed.

—Laura

—

"Laura? Want me to send it?"

"No. I'll hang onto it. Give it to Dumbledore when I get to Hogwarts."

"Okay. Remember, it's three up, two across."

"Thanks, Tom. See you later."

Laura stood, called for Sophie, and walked out into the courtyard of the Leaky Cauldron. She tapped one of the bricks and a large opening appeared in the brick wall. Sophie's eyes got big, and she whispered, "What is this?"

"Welcome," said Laura, "to Diagon Alley."

*

Meanwhile, Harry, Hermione, and Ron were wandering in the bookstore. "_Potions for Dummies_", mused Hermione. "Think we need this?"

"With Snape," said Ron, "We need all the help we can get."

Harry laughed. "Hey guys, come see this. _Sibyl Trelawney's Predictions for the Future_."

Hermione sneered. "Yeah, what's it say? 'You will fall asleep and eat a cookie sometime very soon'?"

Harry flipped through the pages. "Yeah, on page 104."

Ron was laughing so hard he practically fell over. Then, the bell signaling that someone was entering the store rang. Harry saw a tall woman with brown curly hair and hazel eyes, and a girl that looked about his age, with blonde hair and blue eyes. The strange thing about them was that they were both wearing Muggle clothes. Of course, the three friends were too, but most people in Diagon Alley wore robes.

The girl walked over. "Hi," she said. "I'm Sophie McClellan. Do you go to Hogwarts?"

Three "yes's" responded to her question.

"Well, I am now. I'm going to be in my fourth year."

Hermione grinned. "So are we. I'm Hermione Granger, and this is Harry Potter, and over there is Ron Weasley. We're all in Gryffindor."

"I don't know what house I'm in yet."

"Well," interrupted Harry, "Maybe you'll be with us."

"I hope so. Are you guys getting all your stuff today?"

"Yeah. Do you want to come with us?"

"Okay. Laura, is that alright?"

"Yeah, sure, whatever. Have fun. I'll meet you in front of Florean Fortescue's Ice Cream Shop at 5:00."

"Thanks Laura!"

Sophie ran off, surrounded by the three kids.

Laura walked back to the Leaky Cauldron, lost in her own thoughts. Sirius was on the run, escaped from Azkaban. Fortunately, he was unaware that she was back in England. She knew something that could change everything, including their futures. The only problem was, did she really want to reveal it?

*

A/N: Wow. That only took 4 hours. However, I had to develop the plot too. Now, people, PLEASE review. Good, bad, one word, whatever. I'll try to finish the second part today, but I have 2 soccer games to attend. Thanks much! This is Bumblebee, signing out.

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Written on Saturday, April 29, 2000

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2. Enter
Sophie